

I have worked at Access Independence since August 2020. I was drawn towards this field of work and particular center from my love for human services and servicing those most in need amongst different communities. As an employee for the center, I work as a transition coordinator, assisting those with disabilities and the elderly population transition back to independence in the community. I work with people from all backgrounds, ages, and complex situations gain some independence after staying at a nursing facility or rehabilitation center for a certain period of time. Alongside a service care manager and housing coordinator, we work together to provide assistance with PCA services, home modifications, rental/housing assistance, start up items/groceries, and food stamp applications. The work that I am doing directly impacts those who receive the help but giving them a sense of independence and hope once they transition back to the community. After a stay in a rehab/nursing facility where you receive an abundance of help physically, medically, etc., it can be a bit of a shock when having to go back to the community where you are not receiving the same amount of attention. Whatever helps to make that transition easier, is my job. We want to ensure that our consumers get the best experience out of the “Money Follows the Person” program whether they transition back to their home prior to their stay or into a new home where rental assistance can be provided. The smiles I see of the clients’ faces and the tears of joy that are experienced is really heart warming. I receive a plethora of calls and thank you notices once the clients have transitioned back to their independence. So much so that they continue using our advocacy services which further promote independence while on their own. Some clients become like family and you care for their independence and well being like your own.

One client in particular calls, texts, or emails every holiday and reminds our agency of a job well done and also how they pass along our information in hopes that others can receive the same encouragement/support from us as well. In the midst of the happiness this funding brings for people, unfortunately a lot of times, it is not enough and there is always room for more funding. Having to turn away certain needs of a client whom desperately needs something because of the lack of adequate funding, is heartbreaking. You always wish you can do more when working in social services. Something as simple as paying for quality beds for food to put on the table are necessities in life. The cost of living

in 2022 has gone up tremendously. So for those whom do not have an income due to age or physical restraints, the funding for programs like the ones our agency provides is critical and essential towards a successful outcome.

Ariel Estes

Access Independence

MFP Transition Coordinator